

Newsletter

March 1979, Vol. 5 #2

Blissymbolics
Communication
Institute



BLISSYMBOLICS COMMUNICATION INSTITUTE

The purpose of this Newsletter is to publish articles and news items concerning Blissymbolics which utilizes visual symbols as an augmentative to communication. The many applications of Blissymbolics include the following:

1. Communication Difficulties
2. Cognitive and Language Development
3. Reading
4. International Communication

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ARTICLES

Readers are encouraged to contribute letters and articles in order to share their symbol experiences.

Send to: B.C.I. Newsletter
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Ontario, Canada, L9C 5T2

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OVERVIEW

We begin this issue looking at a fascinating eye-coding system created by Mark Hanington, together with a picture of his VIP - symbol user Gordon. Shelley Miller follows describing a Total Communication approach to programmes for the non-physically handicapped retarded population.

We are grateful to Dr. Eugene McDonald and his staff for their two submissions. The first contains a number of excellent ideas for symbol games and activities, and the second is a statement to answer the question we all hear so often, "What is Blissymbolics?" After years of soliciting material for this Newsletter, I have finally made a personal contribution describing a technique for teaching the verb symbols. Then we are treated to the story of one little girl, Billie-Jo, and her early experience with symbols.

If you have had difficulty getting Blissymbolics accepted in your setting, you will be green with envy to read of the success Sandra Osborne has had at Forrest Park School. It sounds like a marvellous place to be!

Symbol Users' Corner contains contributions from children and adults, here and abroad. Thanks go to Mary Hickson of the Toronto School Board for her description of the "Make and Take Workshop" organized by her for teachers interested in Blissymbolics. A little background information on three of our Resource Centres and their Directors should also prove interesting. Finally we hear from Margit Beesley with news of electronic teaching aids.

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The next issue will be published in June. Please send contributions to the editor by May 10th, 1978.

Barbara Rush
Editor

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Cathedral Coding System

by Mark Hanington,
Sicamous, B.C.



The setting in which Gordon is placed is a special class for the Trainable Mentally Retarded; however, Gordon has an active and keen mind and operates on a very much individualized programme. He receives at least a half hour a day of one-to-one symbol instruction, and is expected to do almost all his communicating using symbols. He also "sits in" on the lessons being given to his classmate, who is well behind him in symbol experience.

I would like to share an idea that has helped me tremendously. I'm sure it can't be original because it is so simple; however I've not yet encountered it from any other source, and it may help others.

One of the children I work with is Gordon, 14 years old, cerebral palsied and totally paralyzed from birth. Gordon can move his eyes, and for thirteen years this provided his only expressive communication: glance left = yes, glance right = no. Conventional Blissymbols were impossible; sitting in a wheelchair Gordon was unable to hold his head up. Eye-coding just wasn't working because it was too difficult to gauge precisely where Gordon was looking, whether or not a raised coding frame was used. Gordon rapidly became discouraged and frustrated and refused to cooperate further.

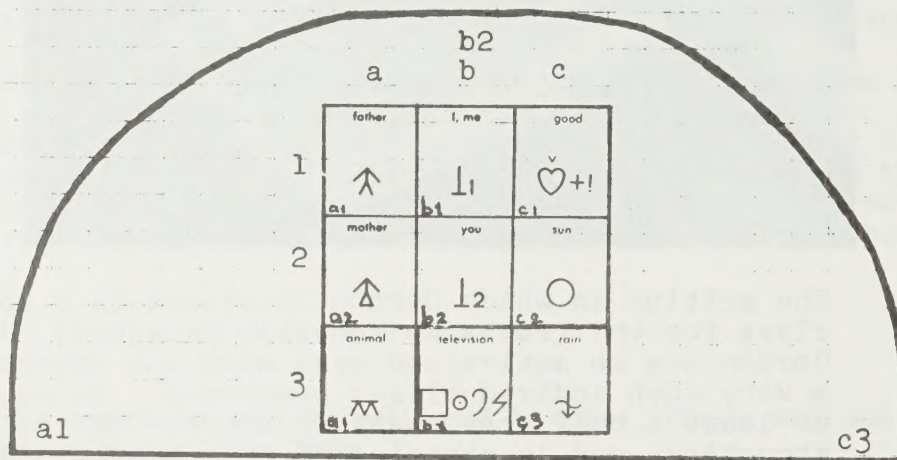
We therefore altered the method of symbol display to compensate for Gordon's inability to code. From a ten unit code we reverted to a three unit code. Like Topsy, the system "just grew" until now we have access to an infinite number of symbols and pictures that Gordon can refer to quickly, easily and happily, and

which are always immediately accessible. If the system were to have a name, it would be called the "Cathedral Coding System" because, as I will explain later, it ultimately presents a shape reminiscent of the shape of stained glass windows in a cathedral.

Gordon has a tray which is normally attached to his wheelchair, and cardboard "boards" were cut to fit the tray. The shape is that of a rectangle with the upper edges rounded.

We deal entirely with 9-boards now, 3X3 squares which are presented as complete entities to Gordon. Ideally all 9 symbols should bear some relation to one another, but at the beginning, when turning him on to talking was the objective, this relation could not be developed.

The first board we began with was a single 9-board made of 2X2 squares and placed in the centre of the tray.



Gordon's tray itself was marked as shown: a1 where "yes" was; b2 straight ahead; c3 where "no" had been. Gordon was taught the 9 symbols and coding was introduced as follows:

1st look: Gordon's eyes look at one of the three codes (a1,b2,c3) to identify the letter code.

Listener says aloud the code (a,b,c).

Gordon makes eye contact with listener to confirm.

2nd look: Gordon's eyes look at one of the three codes (a1,b2,c3) to identify number code.

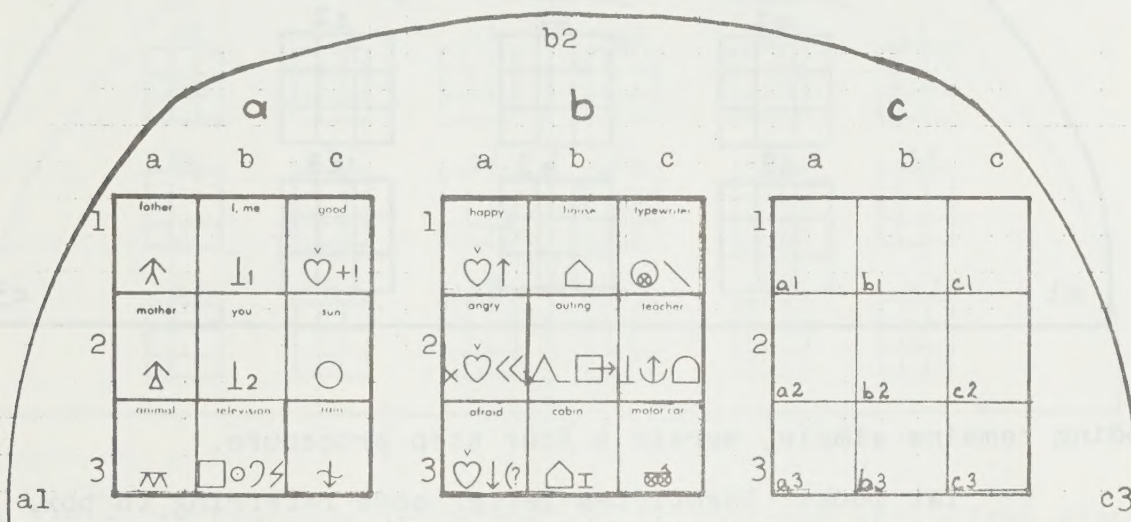
Listener says aloud number code, then names the symbol.

Gordon makes eye contact to confirm.

Note that the code for the symbol is shown in a corner of the symbol square. This was, and remains necessary for Gordon.

(The teaching process at this stage primarily centred around asking questions of Gordon which could be answered using one of the symbols).

Then we introduced another 9-board, plus an empty one as follows:



The coding requirements now became:

1st look: Identifies a letter code, designating which box is being referred to.

Letter said aloud.

Gordon makes eye contact to confirm.

2nd look: Identifies a letter code again.

Letter said aloud.

Gordon makes eye contact to confirm.

3rd look: Identifies a number code.

Number said aloud and symbol.

Gordon makes eye contact to confirm.

Adding on one box at a time, and shrinking them to a manageable size we soon reached our first plateau - 9 boxes of 9 symbols each.

1st look: Identifies letter code referring to box.
Confirmed.

Listener points to appropriate box.
Confirmed.

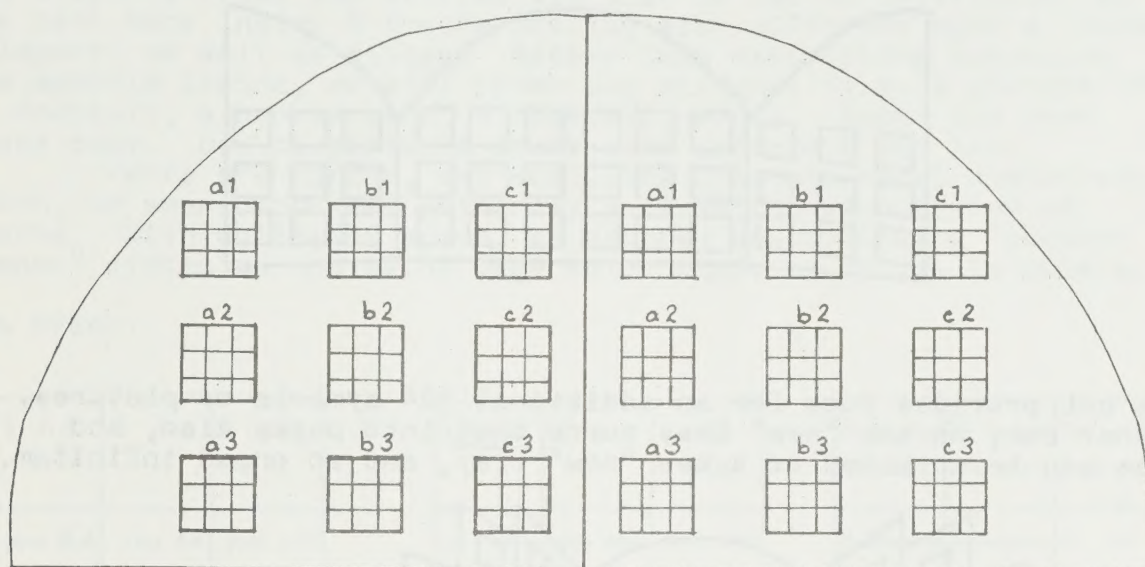
Confirmed.

Confirmed.

Confirmed.

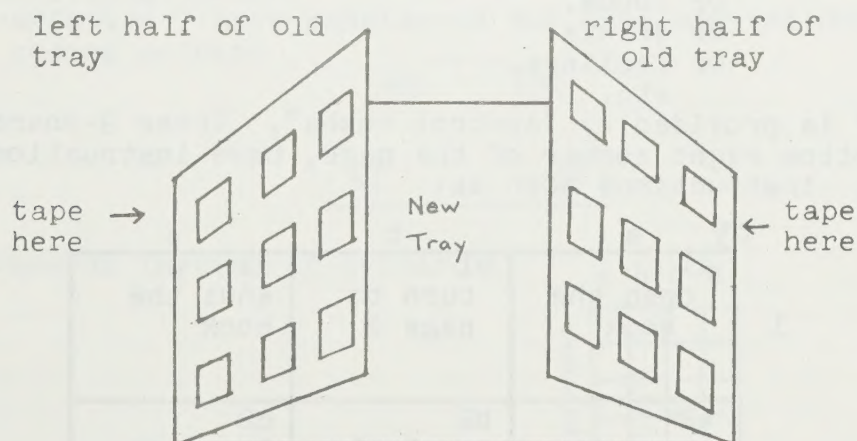
At this point it was found that there remained much additional room on the tray, so we squeezed all nine over to one side, and put

nine new 9-boxes on the other side, making 18 9-boxes divided by a red line down the centre.

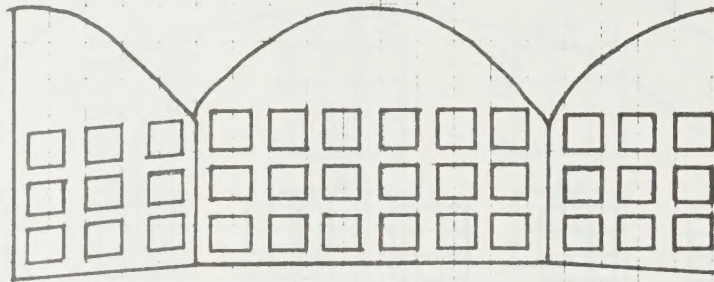


The coding is the same as before except that the very first glance identifies either the left or right side of the tray (the "yes" side or the "no" side), and then the narrowing down procedure begins: letter, number, letter, number, as before. Thus, 162 symbols can be identified quickly and accurately merely by having Gordon glance into three different spots a total of four times.

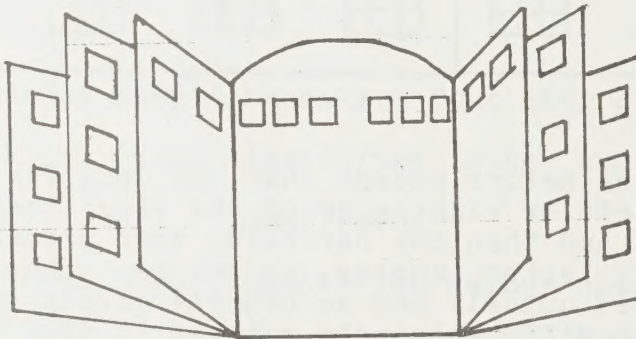
"Depth" of expression is provided in a very literal sense. This is the key that allows us to create an infinite sequence of symbols all readily accessible and codable. Cut the tray down the centre, on the line dividing the two halves of the board. Place the old tray on top of a new cardboard tray and tape them together on the outside left and right edges.



Fully opened up, the "9-board book" looks like a stained glass window.



This cut provides room for an additional 324 symbols or pictures. Another cut, on the "new" tray turns that into pages also, and these can be attached to a new "new" tray, and so on ad infinitum.



9 boards now appear on both sides of the tray "pages".

Accessibility to these pages is provided in the following way: certain key symbols on the very first page, such as Λ animal have a notation to one side (eg. Ll1). This notation reminds Gordon that on the very first (leftmost) board on the second page is a 9-box, or a number of 9-boxes, with pictures or symbols for a wide variety of animals.

Or men.
Or children.
Or foods.
Or drinks.
Or feelings.
etc.

"Control" is provided by "control boxes". These 9-boards, always in the bottom right corner of the page, have instructions for the listener; instructions such as:

C3		a	b	c
1	a1	open the book	b1	turn to page 2
	c1	shut the book		
2	a2	turn to page 3	b2	go slowly through the book while I look
	c2	leave me alone		

The actual information contained on each page is dependent only on the needs and interests of the child and the teacher. Gordon is a sports freak and watches all that he can on television, so we have many inside 9-boards dealing with different sports, teams, players, as well as cities. Rather than restricting ourselves to symbols inside, we will often use pictures (i.e. a picture of a football, a hockey puck, a baseball, etc.). Nouns are thus very easy. Use of pictures seems very efficient and fun.

Verbs are harder, and analysing Gordon's usual communication, he seemed to need primarily a classification system of verbs. With unlimited space, we adopted the following "convenience" system on an inside page which might be of use to others.

An Event:

I did it	I do it	I will do it
you did	you do	you will do
he did	he does	he will do

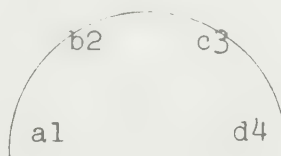
I saw	I see	I will see
you saw	you see	you will see
he saw	he sees	he will see

It happened to me	It happens to me	It will happen to me
It happened to you	It happens to you	It will happen to you
It happened to him	It happens to him	It will happen to him

This could all be achieved using conventional Bliss but might require several codings and still remain unclear. This model, and others like it, minimize the amount of coding required to transmit varying shades of meaning suitable for the observations of a child in a wheelchair.

This system also gives us freedom to luxuriate in lavish expenditure of space - symbols for every month, every season, every holiday, every friend, and so on. The possibilities are endless, and I hope that the idea will benefit others as much as it is benefitting Gordon.

One variation I have considered but have not yet done is to use four coding points:



and thus 16-boards instead of 9-boards.

	a	b	c	d
1				
2				
3				
4				

However, with the "cathedral" aspect of the coding there seems little advantage to outweigh the visual confusion. Space is no longer a limitation.

Gordon has been introduced to about 200 symbols to date. Approximately half of these he has memorized to the extent that he codes without looking for the symbol first. It is expected that by the end of this year he will have an equally intimate knowledge of about 300 symbols. Additionally the "book" being developed for him, which includes nearly 1000 pictures as well as symbols, will be complete and he will be learning his way around it, memorizing where in the book to find which pictures or ideas.

Mr. Hanington is a Special Education teacher in the Shuswap School District of British Columbia, teaching Blissymbolics to three non-verbal students. He is studying for his Master's degree in education from Gonzaga University in Spokane and orienting a number of his courses to include Blissymbolics.

BLISSYMBOLS ARE NOT ENOUGH !

By: Shelley Miller
Hamilton, Ontario

(Shelley Miller is a speech pathologist with the Department of Communicative Disorders at Chedoke Hospitals in Hamilton. She acts as a consultant to a number of Blissymbol programmes serving approximately thirty symbol users.)

The above title seems difficult to understand coming from "Miss Bliss", as I am called by family and friends. However, the longer I work at applying Blissymbols to the non-physically handicapped trainable mentally retarded population, the more I am convinced that this statement is valid.

I feel that our view of communication for this group must expand once again - beyond speech, beyond Blissymbols - to a Total Communication approach (i.e., speech, symbol, sign), allowing for the use of auditory, visual, and tactile mediums for both input to the children and for expression from the children. Many individuals working with the T.M.R. population advocate this approach and are getting results. Teachers using a T.C. approach feel that hand signs and Blissymbolics can complement each other rather than interfere with learning or confuse the child; the two systems appear to reinforce each other. Certain concepts which are more difficult to learn in symbolic form (i.e. action concepts), are some of the easier signs to teach and learn. Conversely, some object or noun concepts are more concrete when depicted by the symbol rather than the sign. Another frequent observation is that although the children may know both the sign and symbol for various concepts, it is the sign which is used spontaneously by the child.

I would like to relate the "evolutionary" process which one school for the T.M.R. in my region has gone through in its philosophy toward communication. During my first consultation at the school I discovered that my client (whom I had assessed as functionally non-verbal) was receiving traditional speech therapy approximately twice a week from a teacher's aide out of the classroom in a one-to-one or small group situation. By my second visit, Blissymbols were the medium for individual therapeutic input - again separate from the classroom. My next visit resulted in Blissymbols being incorporated into some classroom activities for my client plus several other children in the classroom. My last visit left me excited, for now both the classroom with which I had been involved plus the kindergarten class were using a T.C. approach for the entire class - involving both verbal and non-verbal students. This last step was initiated totally by the teachers of the two classrooms. After five months of T.C., the teachers are very enthusiastic about the results. Expectations are based on each child's ability and some success has been observed with all the children. The final stage (not yet achieved satisfactorily) is to offer signing to the parents so that the T.C. method can be carried over to the home environment.

The few points that I would like to make are these: we need to adopt an eclectic philosophy toward communication for both the non-verbal and speech-handicapped M.R. population; that the acquisition of concepts can be enhanced by offering information through various mediums; and that the success of any approach depends on the degree to which it is incorporated into the daily activities of the child.

My involvement with T.C. has been primarily at the tertiary level in that I act as a communication consultant to many programs, rather than being a teacher myself. However, I feel that this is an approach which holds great potential. I would greatly appreciate information from teachers or therapists who are actively involved in using a T.C. approach with a T.M.R. population. Please write to me c/o the B.C.I. office in Toronto.

SYMBOL GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

(The following ideas are excerpted from a manuscript now being prepared by Dr. Eugene McDonald for a book on the Blissymbolics system ... Ed.)

Bliss Concentration

This game may be used to teach children to match symbol to symbol or to match symbol and meaning, and for teaching the ordering of words to make sentences. It may also be used to help other persons learn symbols. For symbol-to-symbol matching, draw two identical sets of symbols using a 2-5/8 inch square as the scale on 3 x 3 inch square cards. The BCI flash cards would provide a model or you might use two sets of flash cards.

Begin with eight pairs of pictographs such as man, woman, table, chair, house, eye, ear, nose. (The number of pairs used will depend on the cognitive level of the players). Punch a hole in each card so it can be hung on a display board. The display board might be an 18 x 18 inch piece of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch plywood with small nails or picture hangers spaced for hanging the cards. The board should be divided into rows which are coloured and columns which are numbered (see accompanying figure).

	1	2	3	4	
Red	.	.	.	.	Red
Yellow	.	.	.	.	Yellow
Blue	.	.	.	.	Blue
Green	.	.	.	.	Green
	1	2	3	4	

Layout for Bliss Concentration Game

Dots represent small nails or picture hangers for hanging Blissymbol cards.

In playing the game, the pairs of symbol cards are hung at random on the display board with their backs toward the players. Player #1 indicates which card he wants turned over by giving a colour-number code such as "red-3". Then he selects one which he thinks will match, e.g., "blue-2". If they match, the pair is removed from the display board and placed in that player's pile and the player takes another turn. If they do not match, the two cards are turned with their backs to the players and player #2 takes his turn. The player with the greater number of cards in his pile at the end of the game is the winner.

To enable non-speaking children to indicate their selection, a display of the colours and numbers should be provided so they can point or signal with eyes and hands.

Variations of the procedure may be made after the children learn to play using simple matching of symbols to achieve different teaching-learning objectives.

1. Using objects or pictures which represent the same meaning as the symbol, the child must identify the meaning of each symbol he pairs or the cards go into a neutral pile and do not count toward his score.
2. The teacher selects symbols which can be arranged to form sentences, e.g., I, you, see, have, eat, food, pencil. The winner is the first child who can form a three word sentence from the symbols he has selected, for example:

I see you

I have pencil

I eat food

Bliss Concentration is a very useful teaching-learning game because it

1. develops attending skills
2. strengthens visual memory
3. develops visual discrimination
4. provides opportunities for social interaction
5. helps the child learn to take turns and to follow rules
6. can be modified for different levels of cognitive ability and language development.

Personal Symbol Picture Dictionary

Provide a three-ring binder and a supply of $8\frac{1}{2}$ x 11 three-hole paper for the child. As symbols are introduced, draw or cut pictures from magazines to illustrate the meanings represented by a symbol. Draw the symbol at the top of the page and paste the picture below the symbol. This is a good project for eliciting parental participation. Father and mother should be asked to spend time at home with the child looking through magazines to find pictures to represent a symbol. After a child has learned the "house" symbol, for example, the teacher might draw the symbol for "house" at the top of a blank page and ask the parents to spend some time with the child at home looking through magazines. When

the child sees a picture of a house, the parent cuts it out and pastes it on the page. Pictures of different types of houses will broaden this concept and strengthen the child's understanding of the symbol. Provide opportunities for the child to show his dictionary to other people.

Stories

Stories can be modified by pasting an appropriate Blissymbol over words in the story. For example, in the sentence. "The gingerbread man ran down the hill", symbols might be used as follows:

The ginger   ran  the hill.

Later, symbols for ran and hill might be added and still later the symbol for the. It is easy to make these changes by drawing the symbols on self-adhesive correction tape which is available at office supply stores.

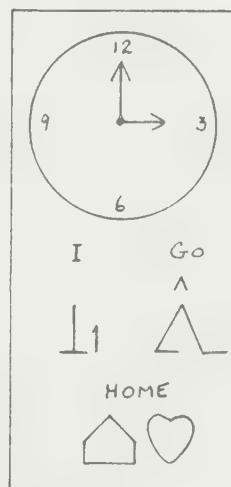
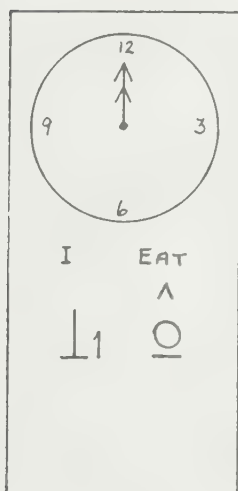
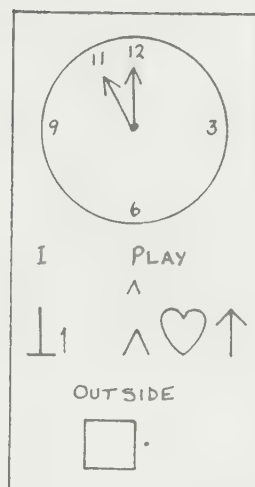
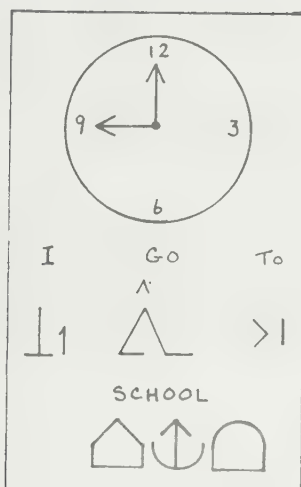
Encourage parents to purchase a small inexpensive children's book and read the story to the child until he becomes familiar with it. Then paste the symbols which the child has learned over the appropriate words in the story. Teacher and parents should periodically read the story while the child looks at the book with them. The reader should ask the child to point to the symbol when that word is read. If the child cannot point, the reader should point to the symbol as the word is said. As the child learns new symbols, they should be added to the story and new story books should be obtained for the child-preferably by the parents. Ask the child to share his books with classmates but reinforce the idea that the book is the child's personal property. Encourage the child to "collect" books.

Bulletin Boards

Symbols for days of the week, months of the year, weather and special days may be taught and used through the real-life activity of putting the appropriate symbols on a bulletin board at the beginning of each day. Discuss the day and have the children select the appropriate symbols to be displayed. Encourage parents to do this on weekends and during school vacations.

Schedules

Symbols relating to on-going events in the child's life may be taught and reinforced by making individualized schedule cards. On each card should be a drawing of a clock showing a particular time and a sentence showing what the child does at that time (see illustrations next page).



Additional cards can be made to show the scheduled time for other activities in the child's life - therapy, listening to stories, going to bed, etc. Put the child's name on each card to help him become aware that this is a personal schedule. Suggest to the parents that schedule cards be developed for activities in the home. Not only does this activity help the child learn symbols but it contributes to development of self and time concepts.

WHAT IS BLISSYMBOLICS ?

By: Dr. Eugene McDonald
Philadelphia, Pa.

The following statement was prepared to answer the question, "What is Blissymbolics?" Readers are encouraged to copy and use this if they wish. A free copy of the "What is Blissymbolics?" pamphlet, which includes symbol examples, is available to anyone who sends postage costs or, in the U.S., a stamped-addressed envelope to Dr. McDonald at Home of the Merciful Saviour for Crippled Children, 4400 Baltimore Avenue, Philadelphia, Pa. 19104.

.....

As a result of growing publicity about the use of Bliss symbols in programs for handicapped children, many people are requesting information about this method of communication. It is not possible to describe Bliss symbols and the system of Blissymbolics in a few paragraphs. This discussion can only introduce the reader to a symbol system which is enabling many communicatively handicapped persons to express thoughts, ask questions and describe feelings.

Blissymbolics was developed by C. K. Bliss whose childhood experience in a multi-lingual Austrian community, as chief of the patents department in an electronics firm, and as a Jew in Nazi Germany led him to believe that many of mankind's problems are traceable to our use and our misuse of language. He set out to create a universal symbol language which people could read no matter what their spoken language. In 1949 he published Semantography which described a system of symbols which have their basis in meaning rather than sound. He envisioned that his symbol system would be used as a universal language in diplomacy, international commerce, travel, and similar high level communicative situations. Despite his vigorous promotion, his work was generally ignored until it was discovered by Shirley McNaughton, a teacher at the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre, in Toronto. It has been exciting to see handicapped persons, including many who are low functioning, learn to communicate via Blissymbols when they could not learn to speak intelligibly or to read traditional orthography. A 17 year old, non-speaking, spastic quadraplegic of our recent acquaintance was a long-time resident of an institution for the mentally retarded where he led a life of a totally dependent, passive recipient of attention. Even though his I.Q. had been estimated at about 20 and he had not shown much progress in earlier speech or academic training, symbol training was initiated, and in less than a year he not only was communicating with those around him but dictating letters using short simple sentences. As a recipient of two of his letters I have seen how the use of symbols has improved the quality of his life. He is but one of many. Some higher functioning, non-speaking persons use Blissymbolics to communicate sophisticated thoughts and express complex emotions. It is being learned and used by mentally retarded, multi-handicapped, deaf, aphasic and autistic persons.

Blissymbolics is more than a set of symbols. It is a visual-graphic communication system based on meaning with no phonetic associations. (Perhaps this is why the system can be learned by children who can't learn to speak or to read traditional orthography which is sound referenced.) The symbols are line drawings composed from a relatively small number of symbol elements. Using a logical system, these basic elements are assembled in various combinations to represent thousands of meanings. Except for a few arbitrary symbols (many of which are in wide use, e.g., the numerals; punctuation marks; and the plus, minus, multiplication, division and equal signs), symbols are based on a logic which facilitates interpretation and retention of their meaning. All symbols in a message are drawn to the same scale with a square as the frame of reference. Several factors determine symbol meaning: configuration or shape of the symbol, symbol size, position within the square, direction of symbol parts, spacing between parts, and the use of a pointer, number, or positional referent. The meaning of a symbol can be changed by the use of an appropriate indicator. The same symbol drawn with different indicators might represent a thing, an action (present, past, future), an evaluation, or be a singular or plural. Several techniques, called strategies, are available by which a symbol user can indicate that a meaning different from the conventional translation of a symbol is intended. Bliss attempts to simplify grammar to the minimum essential for clarity of expression. Rules guide the ordering of symbols in a variety of sentence forms. When used correctly the system is a powerful communication mode. Correct use requires accurate drawing of symbols and observance of the grammar rules.

At this time only a little is known about how communicatively handicapped children learn symbols, what symbols they need to learn, and how they should be taught. During the coming years much will be learned through research and careful clinical observation. For their contributions to be meaningful it is imperative that the researchers and clinical observers know the symbols and the symbol system. A superficial acquaintance with the symbols is not sufficient for teaching them or for conducting any type of investigation using Bliss symbols. Many hours of careful study of Blissymbolics and practice in the use of Bliss symbols should be prerequisite to their application in research or teaching.

In 1975, The Blissymbolics Communication Foundation (now Institute) was established as a non-profit, charitable organization. Through a legal agreement with C. K. Bliss, the Institute has received a perpetual, exclusive, world-wide license to use, publish, teach and disseminate Blissymbolics. The B.C.I. offers in Toronto or, by special arrangements, in other areas elementary workshops (4 or 5 days) which cover basic instruction in Blissymbolics and its applications. Special interest workshops and internship training are also available in Toronto. In the United States training programs are offered in several centers. A combined Correspondence Study-Workshop program is offered at The Home of the Merciful Saviour for Crippled Children in Philadelphia, Pa. This course covers the same content as the elementary workshops conducted by B.C.I. Persons who complete the five correspondence lessons and participate in the two-day workshop in Philadelphia receive a certificate from the B.C.I. Training approved by B.C.I. is also available through the Blissymbolics Resource Center at Loma Linda University in California and Northcentral Blissymbolics Resource Center in Madison, Wisconsin. There are Resource Centers in several Canadian Provinces, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Dates and location for elementary and special interest workshops, information about publications relating to Blissymbolics and membership in B.C.I. may be obtained from The Blissymbolics Communication Institute, 862 Eglinton Avenue E., Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M4G 2L1.

TEACHING THE VERBS

By: Barbara Rush
Hamilton, Ontario

(Barbara Rush, your Newsletter editor, is employed by the Hamilton Board of Education as a Bliss Symbol instructor at the Cerebral Palsy Centre, Chedoke Hospital, Hamilton, Ontario.)

When I first became involved with symbol communication six years ago, I encountered many difficulties in teaching language concepts to the young non-verbal child. One such problem was the verb concept and its related symbol - the action indicator.



As an adult, I can appreciate Charles Bliss' choice of this perfect cone symbol representing one of the primeval actions on our earth, that of the thrusting up of mountains. Older and intellectually-able children are often able to cope with this reasoning, referring to the symbol as the tip of a volcano, that part which is first seen to erupt into action. However, this understanding is beyond what one can expect from a very young and/or retarded child. The teaching idea described herein evolved over time and has worked well in our symbol communication classroom.

We call the action indicator "the working hat" and reach this understanding by way of a three-part learning sequence:

- 1) Neighbourhood Helpers
 - 2) Body Part Symbols
 - 3) Sensory Verbs
- 1) Most primary classes spend some time on the theme of neighbourhood helpers. Using pictures of a nurse, fireman, police officer, construction worker, etc., we discuss the job occupations and uniforms required therefor. It helps if one can relate these occupations to someone in the child's experience. For example, if mother is a nurse, we can discover that she is a "mommy" at home but that when she gets dressed in her uniform (paying particular attention to the cap) and goes to work, she is a "nurse" and performs appropriate duties. When Uncle Bill or the man next door dons his overalls and safety helmet, we discuss at length what "work" he sets out to do. The point to get across is that by wearing the uniform hat, the person accepts another role and performs required tasks - work - action.
 - 2) I have always found the body part symbols to be particularly easy to teach and for children to learn. They are pictographic and always within the child's experience. The following body parts are used initially as they can be transformed into verbs:

eye ear nose mouth hand legs and feet



3) At this point we combine steps 1 and 2. Just as the nurse wears a nurse's hat and performs a nurse's work, our body symbols can wear a hat and do their own thing. Using the chalkboard, cutouts of the action indicator (now called "the working hat") can be placed over the body part symbols in the following manner:

Here is an eye.



Here is a symbol working hat.



When the eye goes to work (place "working hat" over symbol), what does it do?



Answer - see, look, watch, etc.

Repeat for other body part symbols, thus eliciting

(to) hear (to) smell (to) say, tell (to) touch (to) walk, go



With repeated exposure to this procedure, the children are able to distinguish, both visually and conceptually, between the body part and its related verb.

Associated fun activities are making triangular hats for the symbols and children to wear, dressing up with various hats, and singing (in our own weird and wonderful way) songs about hats and actions of all kinds - all activities, of course, related back to concept of action and symbols. Verb sections on our communication boards are always coloured green and there are many poems and songs associating the colour green with the "Go" stop light, another form of action. These are just a few of the enrichment ideas that can be used.

Once the concept is established, we can transfer this knowledge to other verbs. Associating the "working hat" with "action", it becomes easier to teach the non-pictographic verb symbols.

As children mature in age, experience, and symskill, it is possible to teach some of them the philosophical derivation on the action indicator. Until that stage is reached, the "working hat" serves us well!

BILLIE-JO

By: Cheri Bly
Linda Baldwin

At Sunny Park Nursery in Barrie we are experiencing what Bliss Symbols can do for a child's life. Bliss was introduced to a delightful little girl Billie-Jo in 1976. Intensive work began in September of 1978, and she is learning more and more at a rapid pace. Although Billie-Jo has little physical strength or muscular development, with a great deal of determination and intense concentration she uses her index finger to point out needs, feelings and thoughts.

The following paragraphs are excerpts from articles written by Billie-Jo's mother, volunteer helper, and teachers. They tell of Billie-Jo's progress and development of her daily use of Bliss symbols.

According to Billie-Jo's mother, Hazel, "Bliss has been intensified at home and Nursery School since September 1978 in the hope that she may enter a public school system. Billie-Jo has learned specially selected words and thus has designed her own board which consists of 85 words and rising."

Cheri Bly, Senior Teacher at Sunny Park Nursery, started working with Billie-Jo in September 1977. Cheri states, "It was then that the school had contact with Ontario Crippled Children's Centre about Bliss. The Centre suggested making a board the size wanted, and pasting on the symbols as Billie-Jo learned them. Progress seemed slow and the teacher was still puzzled about steps to take next. How does one teach her new symbols? Billie-Jo's mother and Cheri took the Bliss Symbolics course in March 1978. They came back with a few interesting ideas but still nothing concrete.

Billie-Jo was pointing to the symbols "hello, good-bye, drink" and a few others, but where it was possible she pointed to the object or activity. With the help of the local Speech Pathologist, the school, and mother, they decided to introduce verbs first, and then nouns. They now encourage Billie-Jo to communicate using symbols for every need. She has learned about 30 symbols since September of 1978.

Marg Eaton, a volunteer, explains that she has had "The privilege of working with Billie-Jo for three years." They begin their afternoon sessions by reading the note that comes each day from mom. Then they have something concrete to discuss. Billie-Jo delights in these conversations and is proud to be able to contribute information from home. The Bliss board helps her greatly in this respect.

Each afternoon Marg asks Billie-Jo whether she would like to play in the playroom or work with her Bliss symbols and she always wants to work. They use magazines, and cut out pictures to make a story page. These go home each day so mom knows what Marg and Billie-Jo are doing in school.

Linda Baldwin, who works as a resource teacher out of Sunny Park Nursery, goes to visit Billie-Jo two or three times a month in her home environment.

Although she has only had the opportunity of working with Billie-Jo for a short period of time, she has observed Billie-Jo contributing so much more with her new and increased ability in using Bliss.

To give an example of Billie-Jo's eagerness and delight in using the Bliss board, one day Linda went into her home with a big bag of felt. When Linda explained to Billie-Jo, using a sentence of symbols, that they were going to make a story about a boy and girl who liked snow, Billie-Jo became very excited. They started to make a story with Billie-Jo pointing to her symbols on the board about the characters, colours, and numbers of different objects that would be needed. It was all going very well, Billie-Jo helping with gluing, Mom giving helpful suggestions when suddenly, Cricket, their family cat, started to chew the felt boy.

This really caught Billie-Jo's fancy and the laughter started. By this time Linda was ready to pack it in with the story, but Billie-Jo refused to stop. She wanted more, pointing to the bag of felt, then looking at Linda, then pointing to a colour on her board about what she wanted next. This happened three times until she decided she needed a cookie and some juice. Although this is only one incident of many and more to come, Billie-Jo indeed does use her board to full advantage.

As Hazel, Billie-Jo's mother, so nicely sums it up, "Bliss has allowed Billie-Jo to answer many questions so simple to everyone else. She is now a contributor in the family. Everything is not roses, but when a day is filled with more smiles than tears, then life is happier for all."

BLISSYMBOLICS: ALIVE AND WELL IN ORLANDO

By: Sandra Osborne, Orlando, Florida

Thanks to Caroline Price-Clark's presentation at a State Institute for teachers in August 1977, we at Forrest Park School became aware of Blissymbolics as an alternative to spoken language for the first time. Our principal, Cooper Mathews, was not up on Bliss either but when he had money left in a fund that had to be spent before the end of the year, he told us to order the materials and "let's take a look at them". That order opened the door to let us in and to let the children out.

Fortunately, our timing was good. The materials arrived in mid-December and a Blissymbolic Elementary Workshop was scheduled in Atlanta in mid-February. Our staff read the materials that we had ordered to accompany the boards and we selected 10 children with whom to begin the basic 30 symbols. We assigned one person to be responsible for the symbol instruction to each individual child and carefully began our program in mid-January. Teachers, speech therapists, occupational therapists and physical therapists were involved in this venture from the start and everyone was interested because everyone had a need to communicate with these children.

Orange County approved the request to send one teacher to Atlanta for Symbol training. Since our entire staff was already involved in symbol decisions, it was easy for our teacher to share her new knowledge about the system with the others. People came on their lunch hour to learn symbols so that they could talk to symbol users. The OT department became totally committed to helping with proper positioning, construction of individual lap boards for symbol displays and etrans.

Again our timing was right. Greg Vanderheiden was in Orlando in June of 1978 to conduct a Regional Trace Workshop. Our Bliss trained teacher and the chairman of the OT department attended this meeting which gave us more information on language systems, assessment and display boards.

As we planned class grouping for the fall, the entire staff voted that our trained symbol teacher should be given the opportunity to teach symbols full time to our primary age symbols users. Our idea was to give them a good start and hope that this would propell them into our other groups that could meet their academic needs once they had a means of communication. It has been a most exciting year to date. The children are communicating! They are initiating conversations! They are becoming involved in the world around them and they are no longer observers. Symbols are being reinforced in symbol class, speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy and literally, every place in the school.

When the Blissymbolic workshop was scheduled for Orlando, twenty-four of our staff members from every department, aides, the librarian and the school nurse VOLUNTEERED to attend. Our principal asked for and received the necessary donation from our school benefactors, Mr. and Mrs. Chester McGruder, to make this participation possible.

That's the story to date. We think that we have really made a start! We have 14 symbol users at present and several others that need to be assessed for symbols.

Our strength lies in our staff who are dedicated to helping children. We are not locked into systems and old procedures. We are constantly looking for new and better ways to accomplish our tasks. Another strength is that people do not build domains at Forrest Park. If the communication system is good then it should be used everywhere by everyone---it does not belong to one discipline to be used only in that setting. We need the help of each discipline to make the system work for each child and we have that total cooperation.

When you come to see The Mouse at Disney World please stop at Forrest Park to see the Bliss Children----they are having a ball!!

.....

NOTE FROM SHIRLEY MCNAUGHTON:

The first Elementary Workshop in Florida was a unique experience. Twenty-four of the Thirty-nine participants were from Forrest Park School, where Sandra Osborne teaches. Their commitment to enriching the lives of physically handicapped youngsters was very inspiring for Caroline Price-Clark and me. They've seen the dramatic changes in their children since Blissymbol Communication was introduced and their enthusiasm for symbols was very contagious within the workshop. From one trained staff member within a school to 24 trained persons within less than a year is quite an accomplishment. Hats off to Cooper Mathews, principal, and to his Staff. Forrest Park School will be a place to watch.

This "article" was written by Treena, Maria, Russel, Tom,

∠ ∘ □ \ < ΔT, ΔM, ΛR, ΛT,

Stephen and Ted.

ΛS + ΛT.

On Thursday November 9, 5 Blissymbol "residents" from

∞ ΩTh D11 #9, #5 Σ ∫^x 1>

Participation House Hamilton went to Toronto to see

△P.H. ××△H △ >1 ××△T ∘[^]

Ice Capades. The 5 "residents" who went were

⊙[^] △ d2 ∞ ∘ ∘ ∘^x ∫[⊙] ? ∫[⊙] △ ∘[,]

Steph, Maria, Russ, Tom and Lorne.

ΛS, ΔM, ΛR, ΛT, + ΛL.

It was nice and colourful. It was very funny.

∫[,] ∘ ∫[∨] ⊕! + ∫[∨] ∘ ∫[,] ∘ × ∫[∨] ♥↑∘.

We had a good time and we hope to go next year.

∫^x ∫[,] ± ∫[∨] ⊕! ⊕ + ∫^x ∫[∧] ∫[,] ∫[⊙] ∫[⊙].

2d \wedge Beethoven

Music man Beethoven had a father who was

2d \wedge Beethoven \pm \setminus \wedge " \odot

angry. He had 2 brothers. Beethoven

\times \heartsuit \ll . $\wedge 3$ \pm 2 $\wedge 2$. 2d \wedge Beethoven

worked at Christmas. Musician Hayden was the teacher.

\wedge $>$ \odot \wedge . 2d \wedge Hayden \odot $/$ $\perp \uparrow \odot$.

Musician Beethoven's ears went dead.

2d \wedge Beethoven $+$ \setminus \wedge \odot \wedge \odot \wedge \odot .

Andrew
Charlton Park School
England

The Blissymbols are interesting to look at. They help me

$/$ \sum \odot \wedge \odot $>$ $\perp 3$ \wedge $\perp 1$

to be happy because I can talk to people. I say

\odot \heartsuit \uparrow $\triangleright?$ $\perp 1$ $\cdot \vee$ \odot > 1 \perp $\perp 1$ \odot

what I think about. The Blissymbols help me to answer

\odot \odot $\perp 1$ \wedge $>$ $/$ \sum \wedge $\perp 1$ $\boxed{?}$

questions in school.

\times
 $\boxed{?}$ \square \triangle \uparrow \odot .

Russell
Charlton Park School
England

I think Blissymbols are good because I (can) talk (to) people.

$\perp_1 \hat{\smile} \sum^x \oplus \overset{v}{\oplus}! \triangleright? \perp_1 \overset{\wedge}{\circ} \overset{x}{\perp}.$

I (do) not like (the) Blissymbol (for) meat because I think (of) the dead animal.

$\perp_1 -! \hat{\heartsuit}+! \sum \underline{\omega} \triangleright? \perp_1 \hat{\smile} / \overset{v}{\circ} \omega.$

Jamie, 9½ years old
Corseford School
Scotland

I like Blissymbols because it is good to work with.

$\perp_1 \hat{\heartsuit}+! \sum^x \triangleright? | \oplus \overset{v}{\oplus}! > | \hat{\wedge} +$

I hate the Blissymbol for nurse because the doctor has dr

$\perp_1 \hat{\heartsuit}+! / \sum \gg \perp\delta \triangleright? / \perp\delta dr \overset{\wedge}{\pm} dr$

and the Blissymbol for nurse hasn't (got) letters after it. I like

$+ / \sum \gg \perp\delta -! \overset{\wedge}{\pm} ABC |. |. \perp_1 \hat{\heartsuit}+!$

Blissymbols because we can talk among ourselves no bother and (it) is good.

$\sum^x \triangleright? \perp_1^x \overset{\wedge}{\cdot} \overset{\wedge}{\circ} |. |. \perp_1^x \overset{v}{\rightarrow} + \oplus \overset{v}{\oplus}!$

George, 10 years old
Corseford School
Scotland

Letter from symbol user, Shelly Arroyo of Ohio,
sent to Prentke Romich Company.

Hello Mr. Prentke,

○ → ← ΛP

(My) electronic (Bliss board is) good. Thanks.

⚡ ^v♡+! ♡⤴.

(My) friends like to work (and) play with (it).

^x⊥♡+! [^]♡+! [^]Λ [^]Λ♡↑ +.

I (am) happy. I like (my) electronic (Bliss board).

⊥₁ ^v♡↑. ⊥₁ [^]♡+! ⚡.

Editor's Note:

Letters and articles by symbol users are reproduced essentially as submitted. Quotation marks around a word, or the combine indicators around a single symbol, indicate idiosyncratic usage. Neither the symbols nor usage should be regarded as a model for expression or instruction.

MAKE AND TAKE WORKSHOP FOR METROPOLITAN TORONTO SCHOOL BOARD STAFF

By: Mary Hickson
Communication Programs Consultant

"Make and Take" workshops are a popular and successful means of inservice training with the teachers in our school board. Usually, a consultant will establish a topic or theme, order materials, prepare sample teaching ideas, be available to assist and answer questions, as well as generally supervise the mechanics of such an endeavour.

The format is casual and the majority of time is allotted to making teaching materials, games, and activities. Anything a teacher makes during this time, he/she is permitted to take and use in her/his own classroom.

Plans for a Blissymbolics "Make and Take" workshop commenced immediately after a Blissymbolics Elementary Workshop held for forty of our staff in September 1978. The Primary Consultant and Communications Programs Consultant had several meetings to arrange and plan for this activity. Once the materials (e.g. markers, stamps, paper, templates, etc.) were received, the two consultants spent an entire week making sample games, activities, displays, etc. using Blissymbolics. The maintenance department, which provides some carpentry work, was contacted and they designed and made, pegboards, graduated wooden blocks, cuphook boards, wooden form boards and enlarged (template) shapes based on specific instructions from the consultants. These teaching aids were then adapted to use with Blissymbols. Also prior to the workshop, the Blissymbolics Communication Institute was contacted to see if anyone would like to come and observe the workings of such a project. As a result of this contact, Ms. Marjorie Buchanan, Resource Centre and P.R. Coordinator, was able to provide us with an additional selection of sample teaching aids, slides of ideas, and herself as a resource on that day.

The workshop was eventually held during the morning of a Professional Activity Day in January 1979. A school gym was set up to accommodate individual teacher working space, displays of teaching aids, the masses of paper, markers, and other construction materials.

In addition to teachers working on individual projects, an ice breaker group activity was introduced. Groups of 3 or 4 persons were given a packet of construction materials. Each group was to make a Bliss game within a limited period of time (20-30 mins.). These games were later judged and a prize was given to each member of the winning group. Also throughout the entire morning, music (previously taped songs) was played and the participants were to match predetermined Blissymbol titles (no printed words) to the songs being played. The first person to match the four titles to the correct sides of the tape recordings won a prize.

The feedback from the participating teachers has been very encouraging. Everyone indicated that they hoped this type of thing could be done more often and stated that a full day would have provided much more time for construction of individual teaching materials.

This type of workshop could certainly be adapted to different sized groups of parents, volunteers, or any group of professionals. Due to the present lack of commercially made teaching aids, toys, games and activities, there is a great need for time and people power. This type of project may be of use to those directly involved in teaching and/or communicating with Blissymbol users.

Epilogue

Prior to the workshop the consultants had discussed "what to do with the sample teaching aids they had made". It was decided that they could easily be organized, packaged, and routinely sent (upon request) to a teacher through our courier system. After the workshop, the consultants spent one day organizing, writing small accompanying description for each activity or idea, and packaging the materials in one large box. To date we have received two requests for the portable sample ideas box, and this is before the majority of staff have been notified of its availability.

RESOURCE CENTRE NEWS

1. MEL COHEN, CALIFORNIA

History

Became involved in non-vocal communication through a Trace Center Workshop in 1975.

The "Southern California Communication Group" formed and within two years developed a mailing list of 500 and a membership of 85.

Since the university was interested in becoming known as a Blissymbolics centre and involved in the provision of education courses to the teachers of Southern California, it was a very supportive setting with start-up costs buried in the department budget.

The first workshop was under-subscribed due to uncertainty after new legislation affecting education; but this is not expected to affect future workshops.

The Resource Centre at Loma Linda University is primarily interested in disseminating information, providing materials and workshops in a location that is geographically convenient to the residents of the state, and maintaining close touch with the developments in the system initiated by the Blissymbolics Communication Institute.

2. DR. EUGENE MCDONALD, PENNSYLVANIA

The Home of Our Merciful Saviour for Crippled Children, a C.P. centre, is termed a 'Blissymbolics Approved Training Center' rather than the customary Resource Centre.

History

It was felt that there was a need within Blissymbolics for the development of teaching approaches both for instructors and users.

For the following reasons, the structure of a Resource Centre was not adopted:

- (1) the term has special connotations within the state which make the using of it inappropriate.

- (2) the Director wished to become involved in training but not in the distribution of materials.

Results

A correspondence course has been developed. It consists of an initial four lessons (with appropriate reading sections and work sheets) followed by a two-day workshop and completed with another lesson. Certification follows successful completion.

The format has been approved by participants as they are more able to attend a two-day weekend workshop than a four-day format during the week.

In services have been held.

Most staff have been trained in the application of Blissymbolics.

Parents of Blissymbol users have been brought in for a day.

Some materials have been developed.

Work is being done on the teaching of Blissymbols with automated programmed instruction to those with upper extremity problems (a Pal unit has been adapted for head movements).

3. BERT REEVES, NEW ZEALAND

The Matariki unit at Forbury School, where physically handicapped children are integrated with physically normal, is the first school in New Zealand to use Blissymbols. The principal of the Matariki unit, Mr. Bert Reeves, completed Internship Training in Canada last year. He is the only trained instructor of Blissymbolics in New Zealand.

Since his return home he has travelled, at the request of the government explaining and demonstrating Blissymbols at conferences and centres for the physically handicapped. His enthusiasm is contagious and has generated a good deal of interest. He hopes it will be possible for several people to receive Intern Training in Toronto this year.

NEWS FROM THE COMMUNICATION RESOURCE CENTRE AT O.C.C.C.

Our display room is progressing nicely, however the ordered equipment is slow in arriving.

Today I would like to introduce 2 pieces of equipment:

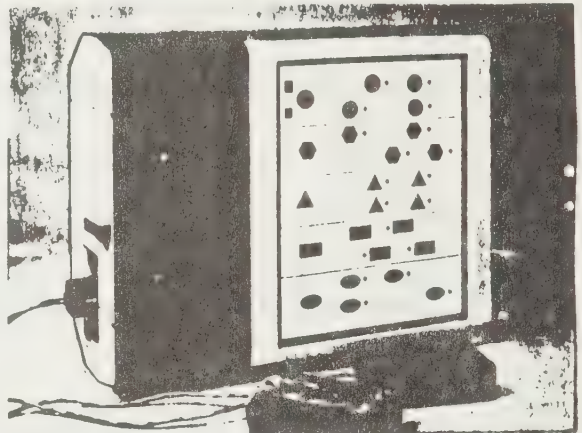
- 1) The Saltus Reading System
- 2) Speak and Spell

Although these 2 pieces of equipment are not directly related to Blissymbols, I think they have some application in our programmes.

I. The Saltus Reading System

○ **Physically handicapped**

If a child cannot hold a conventional book and turn its pages he is no longer barred from education. Any required educational material can now be placed in a pocket scroll and the child, using the appropriate operating switch, can read — he can roll the pages forward and back without frustration. Special material can also be placed on a blank paper scroll with paste and a felt pen. The limitation is only that of the ingenuity of the teacher.



The Saltus Reading System is equipped with 2 soft switches which can be placed anywhere and are very sensitive to touch. The green switch activates the forward motion, a full page at a time, the red switch reverses.

The Saltus is available from:

Ms. Edith Gauthier
Ealing Scientific Ltd.
9649 Côte de Liesse
Dorval, Quebec
H9P 7A3

Cost of basic unit \$474.00 plus \$54.00 for soft switch

II. Speak & Spell



Speak & SpellTM

The remarkable talking learning aid

with

electronic voice and brain.

Perhaps many of you have come across this new, exciting gadget for normal children who are accustomed to dealing with electronic equipment. Basically, it is a learning device for spelling and programmed games. I found that it could be an inexpensive but effective tool in communication, as one can spell words with a visual and auditory feedback. However, it cannot repeat a spelled word. By depressing the key of a letter, it speaks the letter and displays the letter like the numbers on a calculator. The unit is light and compact and is available in different stores such as: Eaton's, Grand & Toy, Toy stores etc. and costs \$79.00.

For further information please contact:

M. Beesley
The Ontario Crippled Children's Centre
350 Rumsey Road
Toronto, Ontario
M4G 1R8

Telephone 425-6220 ext. 279

